

BRIEFINGS

The latest news and updates from the Mid-Atlantic MIRECC



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Director's Update



Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 saw continued productivity and growth for the Mid-Atlantic (VISN 6) MIRECC. I am delighted to report that our ongoing scientific dissemination efforts produced 73 scientific and professional publications in FY 2022, including 53 published papers, 16 advance online publications and 1 book chapter.

We also promoted strategic development by growing our portfolio of funded research, education, and clinical demonstration projects. Specifically, MIRECC investigators obtained over \$4M in grants in FY 2022, compared to \$3.5M for FY 2021, a 12.5% increase. In addition, two of our MIRECC's signature studies -- the Post-Deployment Mental Health Longitudinal (PDMH-L) Study and the Post-Deployment Mental Health Data Repository -- resumed participant recruitment and data analysis safely within the evolving context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many thanks to the amazing team of MIRECC core directors, lab leaders, investigators, affiliates, and stakeholders who made 2022 a terrific year.

A warm welcome to Olga Khonyakina, LCSW. Olga received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from University of Texas at El Paso and her MSW from the University of Central Florida. She will be splitting her time between the PDMH-L study and a clinical trial. Prior to accepting this position with the MIRECC she worked at the UNC Johnston Health Hospital and Triangle Springs Hospital and has experience with both inpatient and outpatient populations. We are very excited to have Olga join us!

John A. Fairbank, PhD
 Director, Mid-Atlantic (VISN 6)
 MIRECC

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FOCUS ON THE VISN

INTRODUCTIONS



Anna Theresa Magnante, PsyD, is a first year Advanced MIRECC Psychology fellow at the Salisbury VAMC. She received her doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Regent University. She completed her clinical internship on the neuropsychology track at the Central Virginia VA Healthcare System (Richmond VAMC) in 2022. Anna's primary research interests include improving quality of life for Veterans with neurocognitive dysfunction. Her specific focus is on examining the relationship between physical health and psychological well-being.

Furthermore, she is interested in exploring how these two factors may erode cognitive efficiency, and whether interventions can be developed to reduce their impact. She is excited to continue her work as a MIRECC fellow with the goal of enhancing clinical care through her research. In her free time, Anna enjoys bicycling, baking, playing piano, and spending time with her loved ones.



Victoria O'Connor, PhD, is a first year Advanced MIRECC Psychology fellow at the Salisbury VAMC. She received her doctorate in health psychology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and completed her clinical internship at the Salisbury VA in 2022. Her clinical interests focus on neuropsychological assessment of older Veterans with complex medical comorbidities. As a fellow, Victoria is pursuing further research training on trauma and related disorders, such as PTSD, that may impact cognitive performance. Her research to date has focused on the role of cognition in the development, maintenance, and recovery from PTSD. She is excited to continue this work as a MIRECC fellow with the goal of improving mental health services and care for Veterans. In her free time, she enjoys spending as much time outdoors as possible.

Bjork, J.M. *Principal Investigator.*

[Transdermal Rotigotine as Adjunct to Behavioral Therapy for Cocaine Use Disorder.](#)

Cooperative Agreement award from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIH) to Virginia Commonwealth University, awarded on September 2022.



The goal of this project is to determine if six weeks of daily application of a transdermal patch of a multiple-DA-receptor agonist reduces cocaine use and increases brain activation signals indicative of greater top-down frontocortical control in persons with cocaine use disorder (CUD) who are undergoing behavioral therapy (compared to those on six weeks of placebo patches). In addition to including community adults with CUD in the Richmond area, Veterans from the Richmond VA will be recruited for this trial using a referral protocol.

EDUCATION AND DISSEMINATION



Poster Presentations

Newsome, M. R., Liu, Q., Wilde, E. A., Steinberg, J. L., Scheibel, R. S., Levin, H., Tate, D. F., Martindale, S., Davenport, N., Hodges, C. B., Rowland, J., Kenney, K., Werner, J. K., Mayer, A. R., Taylor, B. A., Jaramillo, C., & Walker, W. C. (June, 2022). Aberrant Striatal Functional Connectivity in Relation to Walking in Veterans with mTBI. Poster presented at The Organization for Human Brain Mapping 2022, Glasgow, Scotland.

Newsome, M. R., Liu, Q., Wilde, E. A., Steinberg, J. L., Scheibel, R. S., Levin, H., Tate, D. F., Martindale, S., Davenport, N., Hodges, C. B., Rowland, J., Kenney, K., Werner, J. K., Mayer, A. R., Taylor, B. A., Jaramillo, C. & Walker, W. C. (July, 2022). Aberrant Striatal Functional Connectivity in Relation to Walking in Veterans with mTBI. Poster lecture presented at the 15th International Neurotrauma Symposium, Berlin, Germany. *(Nominated for Best Poster Presentation).*

Rowland, J.A., Martindale, S.L. (September, 2022). Contextual effects of traumatic brain injury on the functional connectome: Differential effects of the deployment and non-deployment acquired injuries. Poster presented at the 2022 Military Health System Research Symposium, Kissimmee, FL.

Walker, W. C., Wright, B., Zhang, C., Karmarkar, A. Bjork, J. M., Pugh, M. J., et al. (September, 2022). Relation of aerobic activity to cognition and well-being in chronic mild traumatic brain injury; A LIMBIC-CENC study. Poster presented at the Military Health System Research Symposium.



Conference Participation/Research Presentations



McDonald, S.D. Planning Committee for the 2023 Academy of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals Conference and Expo.

Parker, R., Rappaport, B., & Smigelsky, M. (June, 9, 2022). Upstream suicide prevention and moral injury. Presented at the 3rd Annual Caregiver Summit, Durham VA Health Care System, Durham, NC. (Virtual).

Parker, R., & Smigelsky, M. (July 12, 2022). Trauma part 2: Moral injury. Presented at the VA Clinical Pastoral Education Enrichment Series. (Virtual).

Smigelsky, M. & Wortmann, J.H. (August 31, 2022). Principles and practices from the VA Integrative Mental Health Dynamic Diffusion Network. Presented at the Vanderbilt Divinity School Integrative Chaplaincy Training Intensive, Nashville, TN.

Smigelsky, M. (August 3 & 10, 2022). Moral injury: Considerations for care. Presented at the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies Training and Credentialing Course, Montreal, NC. (as well as Virtual).

Wortmann, J.H. (August 16, 2022). Invited panelist. Faith and Values (ACT). Faith & OCD Roundtable Livestream hosted by International OCD Foundation Lead Advocate Katie O'Dunne. (Virtual).



Invited Presentations

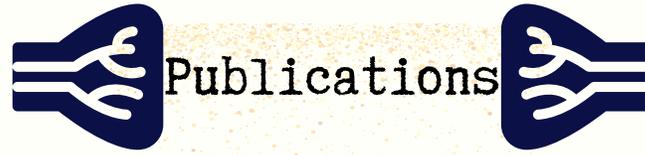
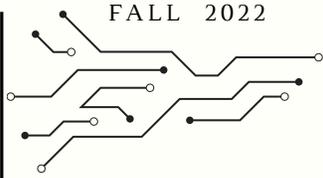
Martindale, S. L., & Rowland, J. A. (September, 2022).

Effects of Blast Severity on Symptom Presentation and Cognitive Performance. Oral presentation at the Military Health System Research Symposium, Kissimmee, FL.

McDonald, S. D., Ames, H., Sippel, J. L. (October, 2022).

Using Measurement-Based Care to Improve Patient Mental Health in SCI Centers. Invited talk presented at the Academy of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals (ASCIP) 2022 Conference & Expo, Kansas City, MO.

McDonald, S. D. & Vriesman, M. (August, 2022). The atheist experience: How to be a competent therapist for the questioning and non-believer. Paper presented at the American Psychological Association's (APA) Annual Convention, Minneapolis, MN.



Scientific Articles:

Gromatsky, M., Halverson, T. F., Dillon, K. H., Wilson, L., LoSavio, S. T., Walsh, S., Mellows, C., Mann, A. J., Goodman, M., Kimbrel, N. A. (2022). The prevalence of non-suicidal self-injury in military personnel: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*.

doi: [10.1177/15248380221119513](https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221119513)

Halverson, T.F., Mann, A.J.D., Zerkowicz, R.L., Patel, T.A., Evans, M.K., Aho, N., Beckham, J.C., Calhoun, P.S., Pugh, M.J., Kimbrel, N.A. (2022). Nonsuicidal self-injury in veterans: Prevalence, gender differences, and clinical characteristics from a national cohort. *Psychiatry Research*.

doi: [10.1016/j.psychres.2022.114708](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2022.114708)

Kelton, K., Young, J. R., Evans, M. K., Eshera, Y. M., Blakey, S. M., Mann, A. J. D., Pugh, M. J., Calhoun, P. C., Beckham, J. C., Kimbrel, N. A. (2022). Complementary/integrative healthcare utilization in US Gulf-War era veterans: Descriptive analyses based on deployment history, combat exposure, and Gulf War Illness. *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*. doi: [10.1016/j.ctcp.2022.101644](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctcp.2022.101644)

Kimbrel, N.A., Ashley-Koch, A.E., Qin, X.J., Lindquist, J.H., Garrett, M.E., Dennis, M.F., Hair, L.P., Huffman, J.E., Jacobson, D.A., Madduri, R.K., Trafton, J.A., Coon, H., Docherty, A.R., Mullins, N., Ruderfer, D.M., Harvey, P.D., McMahon, B.H., Oslin, D.W., Beckham, J.C., Hauser, E.R., Hauser, M.A., the MVP Suicide Exemplar Workgroup, the International Suicide Genetics Consortium, the VA Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Workgroup, and the VA Million Veteran Program. (in Press). Identification of Novel, Replicable Genetic Risk Loci for Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors. *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Losavio, S. T., Holder, N., Wells, S. Y., & Resick, P. A. (in Press). Clinician Concerns about Cognitive Processing Therapy: A Review of the Evidence. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*.

López-Ojeda, W. & Hurley, R. A. (2022). Von Economo Neuron Involvement in Social Cognitive and Emotional Impairments in Neuropsychiatric Disorders. *The Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*. doi: [10.1176/appi.neuropsych.20220136](https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.neuropsych.20220136)

Losavio, S. T., Holder, N., Wells, S. Y., & Resick, P. A. (in Press). Clinician Concerns about Cognitive Processing Therapy: A Review of the Evidence. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*.

McKee, G. B., Knopp, K., Morland, L. A., Glynn, S. M., Connolly, S. L., & McDonald, S. D. (2022). Use of tele-mental health for VA family services before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychological Services*. doi: [10.1037/ser0000704](https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000704)

McKee, G. B., McDonald, S. D., Karmarkar, A., & Ghatas, M. P. (2022). Demographic characteristics, mental health conditions, and psychotherapy use of veterans in couples and family therapy. *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice*. doi: [10.1037/cfp0000185](https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000185)

Pawa, S. P., Martindale, S. L., Gaidos, J. K. J., Banerjee, P., Kothari, S., D'Souza, S. L., Oxentenko, A. S., & Burke, C. A. (2022). Endoscopy Related Injury among Gastroenterology Trainees. *Endoscopy International Open*, 10(8), E1095-E1104. doi: [10.1055/a-1869-9202](https://doi.org/10.1055/a-1869-9202)

Rowland, J.A., Stapleton-Kotloski, J.R., Rogers, E., Taber, K.H., Godwin, D.W., & Martindale, S.L. (2022). Contextual Effects of Traumatic Brain Injury on the Connectome: Differential Effects of Deployment and Non-Deployment Acquired Injuries. *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation* ePub ahead of print. doi: [10.1097/HTR.0000000000000803](https://doi.org/10.1097/HTR.0000000000000803)

Shura, R. D., Richard, K. W., Martindale, S. L., Canu, W. H., Brearly, T. W., & Taber, K. H. (2022). Internalizing and Externalizing Comorbidity and Symptom Burden in a VA ADHD Specialty Evaluation Clinic. *Psychiatry Research*, 309, 114395. doi: [10.1016/j.psychres.2022.114395](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2022.114395)

Wang, X., Zamora-Resendiz, R., Shelley, C.D., Manore, C., Liu, X., Oslin, D.W., McMahon, B., Beckham, J.C., Kimbrel, N.A., MVP Suicide Exemplar Workgroup & Crivelli, S. (2022). An Examination of the Association between Altitude and Suicide Deaths, Suicide Attempts, and Suicidal Ideation among Veterans at both the Patient and Geospatial Level. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*. doi: [10.1016/j.jpsychires.2022.07.017](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2022.07.017)

Watson, J. D. K., McDonald, S. D., Henry, R. S., Pugh, M., Kuzu, D. & Perrin, P. B. (in Press). Understanding from others: It makes a difference for individuals with spinal cord injury experiencing pain. *Rehabilitation Psychology*.

Wells, S. Y., LoSavio, S. T., Patel, T. A., Evans, M. K., Beckham, J. C., Calhoun, P., & Dedert, E. A. (2022). Contingency management and cognitive behavior therapy for smoking cessation among veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder: Design and methodology of a randomized clinical trial. *Contemporary clinical trials*, 106839. Advance online publication. doi: [10.1016/j.cct.2022.106839](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2022.106839)

Wells, S. Y., Morland, L. A., Hurst, S., Jackson, G. L., Kehle-Forbes, S., Jaime, K., & Aarons, G. A. (in Press). Veterans' Reasons for Dropping out of Prolonged Exposure Therapy Across Three Delivery Modalities: A Qualitative Examination. *Psychological Services*.

Wells, S. Y., Wilhite, E. R., & Clark, A. L. (in Press). Promoting access and broadening opportunity for admission to doctoral programs in clinical psychology. *Behavior Therapist*.



RESOURCES FOR VETERANS & FAMILIES

Visit [Self-help resources](#) to obtain education and support information for Veterans, friends and family members who may be facing mental health challenges. VA specialists have assembled a short list of reviewer's recommended materials that may be helpful in finding the most appropriate information for you. We have a new education pamphlet on Moral Injury (MI), click [here](#).

Please click on each resource topic for more information.

- [General Mental Health](#)
- [Depression & Anxiety](#)
- [PTSD](#)
- [Substance Use Disorder \(SUD\)](#)



For additional help, click "[How to Use](#)."



There are several free and anonymous on-line education and life coaching programs that use interactive exercises and video demonstrations to teach skills for overcoming life challenges. For more information, click [here](#).



- [Moving Forward](#)
- [Veteran Parenting](#)
- [Anger Management](#)
- [Path to Better Sleep](#)

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

The DMVA Resource Guide is produced and published by the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to assist and educate Veterans in learning about state and federal veteran benefits.

View or Download by clicking [here](#).



PROVIDER EDUCATION

UPCOMING WEBINARS FOR NATIONAL CBOC MENTAL HEALTH GRAND ROUNDS

"I Didn't Really Feel Like a Human Being, I Felt More Like an Ant.": Veterans' Experiences Seeking Food Assistance

Presenter: Nipa Kamdar, PhD, RN, FNP-BC

Dates: Wednesday, November 9, 2022, 8:00 - 9:00 am CT and Thursday, November 10, 2022, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm CT (repeat)

Click [here](#) to register

Check the website for previous webinars in this series available for credit in TMS.

For direct links to upcoming webinars, click [here](#).



VA HSR&D Cyberseminars



PACERS is an education program for health care staff who care for Veterans with cognitive disorders and their caregivers. While this program targets rural health care staff, providers working in any setting can benefit from this information.

The PACERS online training curriculum includes six e-learning courses; each course is accredited for 1 hour of continuing education. There are also 5 videos that cover important topics related to cognitive impairment, including driving, self-neglect, challenging behaviors, Alzheimer's disease, and end-of-life.

VA Providers: Take courses using TMS links

Non-VA Providers: Use TRAIN links

Course 1: Driving and Dementia-Hanging up the Keys.

Course 2: How to Deliver the Diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease.

Course 3: How to Have an End of Life Discussion.

Course 4: How to Identify Self-Neglect.

Course 5: Addressing Decision-Making and Safety in Dementia.

[VISIT PACERS](#) for links to each course.

MIRECC PRESENTS WEBINAR:

The 2021-2022 schedule for MIRECC Presents has concluded. MIRECC Presents will reconvene in October for the 2022-2023 schedule.

Register through [VA EES TMS](#) then attend LIVE at

<http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/mireccpresents/>

Access the MIRECC Presents webinar series calendar for upcoming events online at

<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/vsn20/Education/webinars-mirecc-presents.asp>



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